

Education for rural development and sustainable land use

Norwegian Forestry Group develops and provides training/educational programs within green economy, rural development and sustainable forestry and land use. The programs are developed together with local stakeholders. The courses/trainings will be tailor-made for local communities, farmers, forest workers, entrepreneurs or forest/environmental officers. Through one of our partners, Forestry Extension Institute, we have been involved in developing and running different educational programs during more than 50 years.



Precommercial thinning in beech. Armenia.

Objectives

Create facilities and systems for training and extension to strengthen environmental and natural resource management, including improving technical skills in natural resource management practices, to meet local need and demand.

Target groups

National authorities, land users, farmers, foresters, tree growers, professionals, NGOs and civil society, environmentalists and nature conservationists.

Organizational setups must comply with national or regional strategies

An important part of the program will normally to identify and develop a National Institution/Coordinator of the program.

This body will in the long run be responsible for:

- developing and implementing the program activities
- coordinate inputs at the national level
- provide inputs to the programme
- follow up of trainers
- provide training manuals and educational materials
- instructors' manuals
- curricula
- time schedules
- audio-visual aids
- booklets, etc.
- arrange and accomplish instructor courses for trainers (authorization)
- provide periodic reports and assess reports from local networks



Activity in Forestry . A countrywide system for vocational training and extension service in Norway. Since the establishment in 1977 close to 130 000 persons have participated.

Participatory approach

To involve all stakeholders is a key to our approach. Target groups and beneficiaries are directly involved in developing the projects and activities.

All activities should be adapted to the local needs in such a way that gaps in knowledge, attitudes and practices can be assessed and identified.

Decentralized and multi-disciplinary training

It's important that the training is multi-disciplinary and targeted:

- The courses/sessions should be offered countrywide and the model itself is extensively decentralized, but could easily be transformed. The basic philosophy is that the courses/sessions should be arranged as close as possible to the participants' homes, avoiding long journeys and need for accommodation.
- The guidance should be in a practical way in small groups (individual adjustment).



Involving the local school and the young generation. Tajikistan.

- Example of subjects: Silvicultural practices, non wood forest products, protection, agro forestry systems, erosion control, watershed management, environmental biodiversity protection, beekeeping, medicinal trees and shrubs, pasture management, climate change mitigation etc.

Development of curriculums

Within the frames of local needs the curriculum will reflect all the functions forests fulfill for people; cultural, ecological, economical and social. Understanding the balance between those uses is crucial when studying how humans interact with forests.

Forests will play an important role in a sustainable society supplying recyclable materials and products based on renewable raw materials. Issues of deforestation and forest degradation will be a central concern. Normally the training undertaken will be informal.

Recruitment and training of trainers

Within the established network it's probably possible to find persons that already are doing extension work as a part of their job and thus can be relevant candidates. Depending on course content, both trainers with practical background and trainers with theoretical background are of current interest.

During the program pilot training of key personnel, training of trainers has to be conducted and a system for authorization and retraining has to be developed.

A broad platform for partnerships

The establishment of a relevant network is of major importance. One of the first tasks should be to identify and select relevant individuals, institutions and agencies that are working in the field of interest and can collaborate and contribute in developing the program.

Evaluation and improvement

The participatory approach keeps a continuous focus on lessons learned and best practices that means one needs to have a continuous system to review and follow up of the curricula, materials, training of trainers. It is also necessary to engage academia and other stakeholders in development and research.

Development of educational materials

Handouts/documentation should be available for the participants. Likewise "equipment" for the instructors. The professional staff will prepare all new courses including teacher's and instructor's manuals, curricula, time schedules, audiovisual aids, booklets, etc.

Therefore it's essential that a local body builds up a staff of specialists, but the possibility to call upon specialists from elsewhere should be considered.

Local implementation

It is expedient to organize training in specific communities, in order to reduce the overall costs, particularly the costs for accommodation, but first of all to increase the relevance for the participants.

Demonstration sites and best practices

It is important that the training has a practical character and is conducted using relevant training sites. To develop demonstration farms/sites that show best practices and business opportunities is normally a part of the program.



Demonstration and training in practical skills. Tajikistan

Outcomes

- Improved sustainable land use, livelihood and improved rural development contributing to a green economy
- Developing institutional capacity for natural resource management and systems for vocational training in public and private sectors

References / ongoing projects

Rural Development by Means of Vocational Training within the Forestry and Environmental Sector in Tajikistan. See also www.nfg.no

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